United Nations S/PV.6672 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6672nd meeting

Wednesday, 30 November 2011, 4 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Moraes Cabral	(Portugal)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Hodžić
	Brazil	Mr. Garcia
	China	Mr. Sun Xiaobo
	Colombia	Mr. Quintana
	France	Mrs. Le Fraper du Hellen
	Gabon	Mrs. Onanga
	Germany	Mr. Eick
	India	Mr. Kumar
	Lebanon	Mr. Karanouh
	Nigeria	Mr. Onowu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kravchenko
	South Africa	Ms. Kota
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Sheard
	United States of America	Mr. Donegan

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

Letter dated 18 November 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2011/726)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

11-61406 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting resumed at 4.10 p.m.

The President: I wish once again to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mrs. Morgan (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to express particular gratitude to Portugal for having convened this open debate. Mr. President, as your delegation stated during the debate on this same issue held in April last year (see S/PV.6300), the elected members of the Security Council have historically been the ones who have pushed forward reforms in the working methods. Perhaps the reason for this is that only elected members can understand the importance of transparency, particularly when their two-year mandate expires and they themselves become dependent once again on the information provided by the new members.

I should like also to commend the efforts made by Japan during its chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions during 2009 and 2010, which culminated with the update of presidential note 507 (S/2010/507) and its subsequent distribution.

We have to recognize that the Security Council has improved its working methods in recent years. Since the adoption of presidential note 507, more public meetings and open debates have been held. The content of and the consultations held prior to issuance of the Security Council's annual report have seen an improvement, and greater interaction with troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries has been established.

Following along those lines, Mexico, during its participation in the work of the Security Council as an elected member in 2009 and 2010, resorted to innovative and inclusive meeting formats, such as Arria-formula meetings and interactive informal dialogues, with the aim of hearing the views of the Member States affected and civil society in cases that concern them directly.

Despite that progress, we have to acknowledge that the implementation of these improvements has been uneven, depending, on many occasions, on the Security Council presidency of the day.

In order to continue enhancing the transparency and efficiency of the Security Council and its interaction with the rest of the membership, we propose the Informal Working Group on Documentation consider making the following improvements to the Council's working methods.

First, during open debates the order of the speakers' list should be reversed, so that Council members would deliver their statements at the end. That would allow them to truly listen to the membership and to include its contributions in the outcomes of such meetings, particularly when a presidential statement is adopted. We regret, Sir, that your presidency was not allowed to take innovative steps in this respect during today's debate, which shows that much work remains to be done.

Second, informal consultations should be convened only when it is strictly necessary. We do not understand the relevance of holding informal consultations to hear the presentation of reports and written statements that could perfectly well be delivered openly.

Third, we should maintain the practice of inviting the Chairs of the country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission to participate in debates that involve issues that are on their agenda. This could be extended to informal consultations as well.

Fourth, there is a need to continue to strengthen cooperation between the Council and regional and subregional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular by inviting the relevant organizations to participate in public and private meetings of the Council.

Fifth, transparent mechanisms should be established in connection with the designation of the chairs of the Council's subsidiary organs. The opacity that currently prevails is unacceptable.

Sixth, sanctions committees should be encouraged to hear the views of Member States affected by sanctions and to include such views in their mandatory reports to the Council.

Seventh, it is necessary to promote stronger interaction between the Security Council and other

bodies, particularly the Fifth Committee, when considering decisions that have financial implications.

Eighth, there is a need to strengthen transparency and accountability in the establishment and renewal of the mandates of special political missions and in their financing.

The convening of this debate reflects the Security Council's openness to considering improvements in its working methods. We hope that the many ideas that have been discussed here today will not fall on deaf ears. The best way to avoid this would be for the incoming presidency of the Informal Working Group on Documentation to submit a report to the membership on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations discussed today.

Finally, we invite the incoming members of the Security Council to adopt these recommendations.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Ms. Štiglic (Slovenia): I would first like to thank the Portuguese presidency for convening today's open debate and you, Sir, for your initiative to discuss the Security Council's working methods and assess the implementation of measures set out in the renewed presidential note S/2010/507 of July 2010. I would also like to recognize Bosnia and Herzegovina's chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and pay tribute to the work and contribution of Japan to the development of the Security Council's working methods, including through its leadership on the presidential note contained in document S/2006/507 and its renewed version. Slovenia also welcomes and supports the initiatives of group of five small nations in this regard.

It is timely and appropriate to have a debate in open format on this important issue. The need to further adapt the Security Council's working methods is one of the key areas of the reform of the Council, and one on which there is a broad sense of agreement. There is still room for improvement in order to enhance the transparency, inclusiveness, legitimacy and accountability of the Council so that it can fulfil its responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security in the most effective and efficient manner. In recent years, we have seen some progress towards the realization of these goals. Strengthening the Council's interaction with the wider United Nations membership is an important element in these efforts.

United Nations Members have been confronted with an increasing number of Security Council decisions with notable security, legal and financial implications for each Member State. It is also for this reason that the Council must ensure better transparency and engagement with non-member States in its decision-making processes on a more regular basis.

The holding of open briefings and debates remains of particular importance. The wider membership should have an opportunity for its views to be heard and, to the extent possible, reflected in the outcomes of such debates. Consideration could be given to the order of speakers, while at the same time allowing some time between the meeting and the adoption of the possible outcome document, thus demonstrating that the Council is willing to reflect on the views presented by the wider membership before the final decision is taken. The distribution of concept papers has proved to be a useful tool for delegations to adequately prepare for their interventions and to focus discussions.

We support enhanced dialogue of the Council with relevant actors, in particular parties directly affected, concerned or interested. We welcome the Council's approach to new meeting formats, such as Arria Formula meetings and informal interactive dialogues, and call for greater use of such meetings. Interaction with non-State actors, non-governmental organizations and civil society should be further encouraged.

We support a more systematic consultation process with troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat on peacekeeping mandates. We welcome the concrete steps taken to cooperate more closely with the chairs of country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as to interact with regional and subregional organizations and make better use of Article 54 of the United Nations Charter.

We welcome the introduction of monthly horizon-scanning briefings as an important contribution to conflict prevention and early warning. We support more frequent and open briefings by the Secretariat, the Special Representatives and Special Advisers of the Secretary-General on situations on the Council's

agenda and those of emerging concern. We welcome the use of available technology that allows for more briefings from the field and real-time reaction to situations on the ground. We see Council field missions as a valuable tool in providing the right perspective on local realities.

In our view, the Security Council should emphasize the importance of the rule of law in dealing with matters on its agenda. This embraces reference to upholding and promoting international law and ensuring that the Council's own decisions are firmly rooted in that body of law, including the Charter, international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international criminal law. Special attention should be paid to the protection of civilians and those most vulnerable. We urge the permanent members to refrain from the use of the veto in the event of genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law. We also support further consideration of ways to improve the transparency and work of the sanctions Committees.

Throughout the years, we have witnessed the widening of the diversity of the Council's agenda, its ever-increasing workload, and the growth in complexity of the issues before the Council. We believe that the way the Security Council considers improving its working methods is in large part connected to the increasing need to refine and enhance its work throughout the conflict cycle by considering prevention, including new emerging threats, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding in a holistic manner.

Slovenia remains convinced that Security Council reform needs to address both the enlargement of the membership and improvement of its working methods. In that context, it is crucial to ensure that the Security Council continues to regularly assess how its practice matches the goals contained in presidential note 507 and that it continues to collect valuable inputs from the entire membership on ways to improve its working methods further.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this debate. We hope that these debates can be institutionalized by the Council. I will abbreviate what I have to say, and am circulating a longer statement.

As we all do, Australia supports a Security Council that better reflects the contemporary world and is responsive. Reform of the Council's composition is central, but so too, of course, is improving its working methods. The working methods of an organization can be the key to its performance. We have said here before that the basic mindset of the Council should be one of active accountability and deliberate transparency. The more transparently the Council undertakes its work, the more accountable it is; the more it shares information, consults and accepts input, the more effective it will be.

There have been good developments on working methods to welcome, but as we know there remains much to do. I will mention three issues.

The first relates to conflict prevention. As the security challenges facing the globe evolve, it is vital that the Council make best use of the tools already at its disposal to prevent conflict. To do so, it needs to be able to act in an informed manner. In this context, we join others in welcoming the practice of regular briefings by the Department of Political Affairs, with a focus on horizon-scanning and early warning. These should be maintained. We also commend the Council's willingness to consider complex thematic issues relating to some of the globe's most demanding challenges. The recent debate on climate change and security signalled responsiveness to challenges that affect small island States in particular.

Of course, the Council should not stray into the prerogatives of other organs, but the Council is of course responsible for maintaining international peace and security. We now understand that challenges to this can be complex and non-traditional. Having up-to-date information and analysis on new security challenges and discussion of their implications is essential to the Council's preventive role.

In order to enhance the Council's capacity for prevention, we support the suggestion of regular briefings from the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities. We have also encouraged the Council to issue a standing invitation to the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The second issue I want to raise is improving consultation with troop- and police-contributing countries. These are an important mechanism to ensure that peacekeeping mandates are informed by knowledge of ground realities, and that expectations are realistic and well understood. Such consultation is also important throughout the lifecycle of a mission and in planning transitions. Consultative meetings need to be structured and scheduled well in advance. We welcome the initiatives adopted in its presidential statement of 26 August (S/PRST/2011/17) to improve these processes. Mission-specific groups can also be an important conduit to the Council; the core group on Timor-Leste, of which we are a member, is a good example.

My third point concerns interaction between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). While there has been good progress, there is much more that can be done to achieve a more dynamic and organic relationship between the two. We welcome the participation of the PBC Chair and the chairs of the country-specific configurations in Council meetings and informal dialogues. We believe that the Council could do more to draw on the expertise of the PBC, particularly during the renewal of mission mandates.

We endorse much of what has already been said by others, including about more open meetings; more information on the work of sanctions committees; more engagement with regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union; more use of Arria Formula meetings and informal dialogues; making draft resolutions and presidential statements available to non-members at an early stage; and enhancing efficiency through the better harnessing of technology.

Of course, the Council's efficiency and effectiveness also depends in part on the performance of us, the non-members. It is necessary for us to take full advantage of the opportunities open to us; we should do so actively and dynamically, but above all we should have something to say. We would welcome reforms to make these debates less formulaic and more productive. They could include a better reflection, in the outcome of meetings and the Council's annual report, of what non-Council members say. We welcome Portugal's initiative in the recent meeting on new challenges to peace and security (S/PV.6668) of allowing the briefers a chance to respond to the comments from Council members.

To conclude, we have here a very simple linear equation. Increased transparency and consultation increase effectiveness and further enhance the legitimacy of this body in the eyes of all of us Member States. That, of course, strengthens the Council's pre-eminent role in global peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Ulibarri (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing our appreciation to Portugal, and to you in particular, Mr. President, for your leadership and commitment to improving the Security Council's working methods, and for having organized this debate.

Costa Rica aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of the group of five small nations (S-5), but we would like to suggest some additional ideas and proposals, focusing on transparency.

In a representative entity such as the United Nations, transparency should be a basic standard and a permanent practice in all its bodies, including the Security Council. We know that in order to effectively promote international peace and security, the Council needs a reasonable degree of confidentiality for some of its analytical, deliberative and decision-making processes. However, such confidentiality should be the exception, not the rule. Beyond this, it is crucial to cultivate a genuine willingness to share all information that is not confidential through transparency and disclosure processes that are systematic, timely and easily accessible to all Member States. Better transparency, apart from being a duty, would increase the perception of the Council as a representative, reinforce its legitimacy and enable it to draw on the most relevant contributions of all Members of the Organization, thereby improving its effectiveness.

Costa Rica recognizes that in the wake of the presidential note of July 2006 (S/2006/507) and its update of last year (S/2010/507), significant progress has been made in transparency. In the written version of this statement, we highlight the Council's most important advances, so I will not repeat them now. However, I should add that from the non-governmental point of view, the Security Council Report website has contributed fundamentally to well-informed, systematic and rigorous monitoring of the activities of the Council.

To sum up, we can say that the Security Council's transparency has improved. Nevertheless, the improvements are not enough; they have not been consolidated, much less duly formalized. As such, they are at risk of paralysis or reversal. For example, while the number of meetings open to all Member States has increased, these are often preceded by informal closed meetings where agreements are negotiated. The reports by the presidencies assessing the work done during the month of each presidency are extremely infrequent. The Council's annual report to the Assembly, due to its enormous length, inadequate synthesis and total lack of analysis, is rarely illuminating and is not released far enough ahead of the debate on its contents. Special reports on topics of particular relevance, as provided for in the Charter, are strikingly absent.

In light of these and other considerations, I would like to conclude with some specific suggestions. Many of these are included in the annex to the draft resolution that has been submitted for consultation by the S-5, and Costa Rica considers them particularly important. The list is included in my written statement; I will simply cite as examples the importance of regularizing the assessment reports made at the end of each presidency; scheduling more frequent and substantive consultations with interested Member States as part of the process of drafting and preparing draft resolutions and other work produced by the Council; notifying Member States in a timely manner about the development and final assessment, including budgetary aspects, of missions established by the Council; holding more frequent and more substantive open meetings of the Council; and cultivating a more open attitude towards external contributions.

Five years after the appearance of presidential note 507, the Council is at a critical juncture where its transparency and general working methods are concerned. It must either rekindle its energy and momentum in order to consolidate the gains achieved so far and move forward with those that are still pending, or remain stagnant and regress, with negative results for both its effectiveness and its legitimacy. We all know that the first is the only real option.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Luxembourg.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg warmly congratulates the Portuguese presidency of the Council on its initiative in organizing this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council, and on its commitment to progressing towards greater effectiveness, increased transparency and improved interaction with non-members of the Council. I also commend Bosnia and Herzegovina for the results achieved under its chairpersonship this year of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Since the last open debate on this subject was held in April 2010 (see S/PV.6300), the Security Council has, commendably, continued to work on applying many of the proposals in the 2010 presidential note (S/2010/507). We encourage the Council to continue in this direction in order to, among other things, further entrench new forms of informal dialogue with non-member States of the Council and parties concerned with situations on the Council's agenda; make more regular use of Arria Formula meetings in order to strengthen interaction between the Council and civil society and non-governmental organizations, whose analyses and experience on the ground may have particular relevance for the Council's deliberations; organize a meaningful number of open Council meetings in order to assure direct transparency in the Council's deliberations for both non-member States and the international community as a whole; improve transparency in the deliberations of subsidiary bodies of the Council, particularly the sanctions committees, and encourage the chairs of those committees to take every opportunity to seek the views of non-member States that are actively interested in their areas of activity and to keep them informed about their ongoing work; and, finally, strengthen relations with regional and subregional organizations on issues of international peace and security, so as to benefit more from their special expertise.

We also welcome initiatives aimed at better preparing the Security Council to react to new threats to international peace and security, particularly the practice initiated by the United Kingdom of inviting the Department of Political Affairs to brief the Council on topics whose destabilizing potential makes them worthy of attention. Luxembourg is also following with great interest the work of the group of five small nations, which has put forward concrete proposals for making further progress in the Council's working methods. We broadly endorse those proposals.

Allow me to raise a subject particularly dear to me in my capacity as chair of the Guinea country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC): the importance of encouraging ever closer relations between the Security Council and the Commission. Guinea's case is special in the sense that Guinea is the only country on the PBC's agenda that is not also on the agenda of the Council. The PBC's support of Guinea, aimed at consolidating peace and helping democracy take root there, is nonetheless relevant to the Council's work.

Beyond the specific situations of the countries that are on the agendas of both the Council and the Commission, the latter's experience and expertise can be helpful to the Council, whether on questions of the links between peacekeeping and peacebuilding and the transition through the various post-conflict phases, on preparing for elections in fragile States, or on subjects of regional significance, such as combating transnational crime and drug trafficking in West Africa.

The Peacebuilding Commission can also offer an integrated and holistic perspective on the interdependence between security and development, a subject that the Council took up on 11 February, on Brazil's initiative (see S/PV.6479). The PBC can help the Security Council not to lose sight of the absolute necessity of bettering socio-economic conditions in post-conflict countries in order to make sustainable peace viable.

Luxembourg, a founding Member of the United Nations, has never been a member of the Security Council. We are therefore particularly attentive to the interaction between member and non-member States of the Council, and between the Council and the other main organs of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. But the continuing improvement of the Council's effectiveness is of interest to all of us who have subscribed to the Charter, which stipulates in Article 24 that the Council acts in the name of all Member States to ensure the rapid and effective response of the Organization to preserve international peace and security. Our credibility and that of our Organization depend on it.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Mr. Viinanen (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. I will deliver an abbreviated version of the statement circulated in the Chamber.

There has been considerable improvement in the Council's working methods in recent years. We underscore the need for regular informative briefings to non-members of the Council. Interactive wrap-up sessions at the end of each presidency would enhance information-sharing and openness. The Brazilian presidency held such a meeting, for which we thank it. We encourage other Council members to consider organizing such briefings in the future.

The annual Finnish workshop aims at giving new members of the Council an in-depth orientation to the practice, procedures and working methods of the Council, in order to help new members to hit the ground running. The workshops also serve the wider membership, as their reports are distributed as official documents of the Council.

The Security Council report is another initiative that has greatly contributed to information sharing and increased openness about the work of the Council.

Efficiency in the Council's work is very important. Conflicts today are more complex and the Council's agenda is increasingly stretched. There is scope for improving the quality of open debates by ensuring that outcome documents reflect input from all participating countries. Concept papers could direct the focus of debates to questions on which the Council would like to consult the larger membership.

Lately the Council has increasingly been using video links to receive briefings from the ground. This is a welcome development and we encourage the Council to continue developing the practice further.

The Council should improve its cooperation with other United Nations bodies. In addition, troop- and police-contributing countries should be more closely engaged at all stages of decision-making for peacekeeping operations.

The Council should continue to actively seek ways to improve its ability to prevent conflict and to solve long-term conflicts on its agenda. Good cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission and other partner organizations, such as regional and subregional organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions and others, is instrumental in that endeavour.

The Council has made good progress in developing cross-cutting issues, such as women and peace and security. The Council should now systematically link country-specific situations and horizontal themes, and follow up on requests for thematic information when handling reports on country-specific situations.

The Nordic countries welcome the significant progress achieved in enhancing due process for the listing and de-listing procedures of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities. We welcome the renewal of the mandate of the Ombudsperson. We recommend that fair and clear procedures be extended to all sanctions regimes.

We call on the Council to continue on a positive reform path and to hold annual open debates on this issue. In this context, we would like to emphasize the importance of presidential note S/2010/507, and we urge the Council to fully implement the innovations contained therein.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for having organized this debate on the Security Council's working methods, with which you bring to a close a rich and intense month of November for the Council under the presidency of Portugal.

No one can deny the gradual improvement in the Council's interaction with non-member States and other international and regional actors or the wealth of information available about the Council's work. They are unprecedented. That progress can be attributed to the Council's will to infuse its work with more openness, transparency and interaction; to the growing legitimate interest of non-member States to be involved in and informed about the Council's work and decisions, which it undertakes on behalf of the entire international community; and to advances in new information and communication technology, which have made the dissemination of information faster and easier, fostering greater access.

Year by year, the Council has come to consider new situations and to address multiple challenges that directly affect international peace and security. The Council has begun to face challenges that are different in scope, size and nature from traditional inter-State conflicts, notably international terrorism, civil conflicts, weapons of mass destruction and transnational organized crime. The potential impact of those challenges on the international community as a whole has led to an ever-increasing interest on the part of non-member States in the Council's work.

Responding to that growing interest, the Council has undertaken commendable efforts to improve its efficiency and transparency and to interact more effectively with other parts of the United Nations system. The Council's adoption, at the initiative of Japan, of presidential note S/2010/507 and the panoply of measures it recommends bear witness to the Council's resolve in this matter. Those efforts deserve to be pursued and expanded. In this regard, my delegation would like to offer the following thoughts.

First, the Council's increasing use of open and interactive debates is an overall positive development. At the same time, the Council must retain the discretion to decide on the format of meetings, based on the sensitivity of the matter under consideration and an objective assessment of the impact of a given format on the Council's ability to consider the issue.

Second, the practice of the Council presidency to hold informative briefings for non-members on the monthly programme of work gives non-members an opportunity to interact directly with the presidency of the Council. The practice should be maintained and expanded.

Third, consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries are important not only because they respond to a pressing need but also because they promote efficiency. We must take advantage of those countries' experience and expertise at the various stages of designing and implementing mandates for peacekeeping operations.

Fourth, given that the maintenance of peace is the primary function of the Council, it is important to make as much use as possible of the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and to encourage it to bolster its collaboration with troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat.

Fifth, the Council's interaction with regional and subregional organizations is an added value for the maintenance of international peace and security. The

Council has made significant progress in furthering such interaction in recent years.

Sixth, while we welcome the increased number of open thematic debates, we believe that they should be narrowly focused and that the views of non-member States should be taken into consideration.

Seventh, the Council has involved the Peacebuilding Commission and its country configurations in its debates on an increasingly regular basis. It is important to strengthen that practice because peacebuilding is not only built into peacekeeping mandates, but it is also an element of conflict prevention that helps to prevent relapse into violence.

Eighth, no effort must be spared in the development of preventive diplomacy. My delegation is pleased to note that this theme has gained relevancy in recent times, both within and outside of the Council. During our term in the Council, my delegation will make every effort, together with the other members, to strengthen the Council's conflict prevention activities, especially in Africa.

Ninth, the Council's annual report to the General Assembly has notably improved and is now more substantive and analytical. We encourage its continued improvement and welcome the practice launched four years ago whereby the presidency of the Council requests the viewpoints of United Nations Member States well before consolidating the report.

My tenth and penultimate point is that the monthly assessments made available to all Member States by the Council presidency are a valuable source of information on the work of the Council. The practice of presenting those reports at the end of each presidency should be reinforced to preserve their relevance and timeliness.

My final point relates to the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which plays a crucial role in improving the Council's working methods. It should strengthen its interaction with non-members of the Council and work towards evaluating the implementation of note S/2010/507 and possible additions thereto, bearing in mind the views of all United Nations Member States.

In the ongoing endeavour to improve the working methods of the Council, my delegation considers it necessary to integrate both the requirements for prompt and effective action to maintain international peace and security, and the support of the international community for measures taken. That is a difficult task, to be undertaken with pragmatism, open-mindedness and awareness that the Council acts on behalf of the entire international community.

I began by thanking the Portuguese presidency. I wish to conclude on a more personal note and to congratulate you personally, Sir, for the tact, effectiveness and the ease with which you have conducted the deliberations of the Council this month. You have set a good example for a new member preparing to return to the Council next year.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Morocco for his very kind words, which have likely been exaggerated by friendship.

I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Oyarzun (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before we begin to consider the implementation of presidential note S/2010/507 on the working methods of the Security Council, I believe that a triple manifestation of gratitude is both necessary and just. First of all, my delegation thanks Portugal for having taken the initiative to convene this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council and for the excellent concept note (S/2011/726) it has distributed. We welcome the opportunity to speak on a subject of such importance to us all. We also thank Belgium and Japan for having convened similar open debates during their respective presidencies of the Council.

We are fully aware of the difficulties and understand that organizing open debates on this subject is not an easy task and that a certain resistance must be overcome. But it is worthwhile. The working methods of the Security Council may not always be the hottest issue on the current international agenda, but there is no denying that it remains relevant for all of us in our daily work at the United Nations.

Secondly, we wish to thank the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and especially the four countries that have chaired it since 2006: Japan, on three separate occasions; Slovakia; Panama; and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their excellent work led to the milestone presidential note S/2006/507 and its 2010 update. We are further indebted to Japan for updating the

handbook on the working methods of the Security Council in December 2010.

Thirdly, we would like to recognize the important role played in this matter by the group of five small nations — Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland (S-5) — first by submitting a draft resolution in March 2006 containing a list of concrete measures for the Council's consideration, and most recently by submitting in March a second draft resolution with additional measures, which was revised in June. The S-5's continued contribution to this matter has been outstanding.

The members of the Security Council have committed themselves to implementing the measures contained in note 507. Some are already being implemented; these include those related to the Council's monthly programme of work, such as the publication of the preliminary forecast, the briefings by the incoming presidency and the ongoing updates to the programme of work.

Other measures could be implemented more effectively and in a more consistent manner; these include the measures contained in paragraph 28 of the note on open debates; paragraph 44 on draft resolutions, presidential statements and press statements; paragraph 59 on informal interactive dialogues; and paragraph 65 on the famous Arria Formula.

We agree with the fives-5 that note 507 must be continuously updated and enhanced through additional measures. Its most recent draft resolution on working methods, which was submitted to us all in its letter of 25 March, contained a list of measures that the Council could use as a guide. I would like to express Spain's support for some of these measures, in particular the following three: briefings by the outgoing presidency on the implementation of its programme of work; the establishment of a working group on lessons learned that would be responsible for analyzing suggested mechanisms aimed at enhancing implementation of the Council's decisions and proposing mechanisms for improving it; and the inclusion of a specific section in the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly on the implementation of its working methods.

We should like to propose an additional measure that was not included in the list drafted by the S-5. We consider it important to provide updated information on the composition of the groups responsible for preparing the initial drafts of resolutions. We encourage the distribution of those initial drafts, to the extent possible, before they are passed on to informal consultations of the whole. I know that is an ambitious proposal, but if it were put into even partial practice it would certainly enhance the transparency of the Council's work.

It is a fact that note 507 contains no specific measures regarding the veto. Such measures appear, however, in the S-5 list. My delegation is in favour of including those measures in future updates of the note. It should not be a problem for the permanent members of the Council to commit to implementing those measures, which are supported by the overwhelming majority of Member States. For example, the following two measures are aimed at limiting the use of the veto: an explanation should be provided for the reasons for resort to the veto, equivalent to an explanation of vote; and resort to the veto should be avoided in cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It would not be an obligation to produce a result, but it would be, at the least, an obligation of conduct.

In conclusion, we believe that we should maintain our current approach to improving the Council's working methods. We are in favour of the regular convening of open debates, perhaps every two years, as proposed by the representative of Australia, and of updating presidential note 507 periodically, perhaps every four years. It is our hope that the members of the Council, permanent and non-permanent alike, will commit to considering and eventually to implementing new practical measures as a result of today's open debate.

Moreover, Spain believes that it is the collective duty of all Member States to contribute to improving the working methods of the Security Council in order to make it more transparent, inclusive, efficient and effective. I would like to conclude by reiterating the thanks offered by the Ambassador of Morocco to you, Sir, for the excellent work of your presidency this month.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Hassan (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation endorses the statement delivered

by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I congratulate you once again, Sir, on your presidency of the Security Council for this month, and commend you for having organized this important debate to review developments in the implementation of the measures set out in the note by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/2010/507 of July 2010. Those measures were proposed to boost the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council's working methods and to achieve more transparency, which is the aspiration of all United Nations Member States, in accordance with the Charter principles related to the mandates and prerogatives of the Council in maintaining international peace and security. I take this opportunity to once again congratulate Azerbaijan, Guatemala, Morocco, Pakistan and Togo on becoming new non-permanent members of the Council for the next two years. We wish them great success in their work and in the Council's deliberations.

In our view, reforming the working methods of the Council is a major component of comprehensive reform. Security Council reform would ensure equitable geographical representation for all continents, especially Africa, which is home to 54 countries. It is worth recalling that some 67 per cent of the items on the Council's agenda involve Africa.

Given that today's meeting is focused specifically on procedural questions that are necessary to enhance the Council's capacities, we wish to highlight some elements of the final document of the sixteenth Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Bali in May (see s/2011/407, annex I). In particular, that document refers to improving the Council's working methods and to implementing the measures set out in presidential note 507, in particular the publication of the daily programme of Council deliberations in the *Journal of the United Nations* and making it available to all. In addition, the monthly programme of work should be circulated at the beginning of every month for consideration by all Member States. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of some Member States, when presiding over the Council, to ensure that all Member States are informed about the programme of work by keeping them abreast of items on the Council's monthly agenda in a transparent and objective manner.

In regard to the briefings and information offered by Secretariat representatives and subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, we call for the texts of those briefings to be distributed among all countries. Copies of the slides or other visual material that are sometimes used during the briefings should also be distributed.

Council documents, especially reports of the Secretary-General on peacekeeping operations, should be circulated in advance, before the Council considers them, in all official languages of the United Nations. Very often, a version of the report is distributed to Council members only, but is not circulated as an official document to all Member States until the day of the meeting and occasionally even thereafter.

In regard to meeting formats, we are mindful that the number of public meetings and open debates is growing every day. However, we all agree that most Council meetings involve consultations behind closed doors, in which only Council members, some Secretariat representatives and other staff members participate. Nevertheless, in the interests of objectivity and transparency, the country concerned should be allowed to participate in those consultations. We reiterate the importance of enhancing consultations and cooperation between the Council and regional and subregional organizations, with which we must organize consultative meetings. This is consistent with the provisions of paragraph 170 (a) of the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit (resolution 60/1) on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in which the relevant regional organizations are invited to participate in both open and closed Security Council meetings, whenever needed.

We recall the three rights of all Member States under the Charter and the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, specifically rules 37 and 39 regarding the participation of all Members in public meetings. We welcome the efforts of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, but we still hope that its activities, conclusions and recommendations on reforming the working methods of the Council will be included in the annual report of the Council to the General Assembiy so that all Member States might participate and contribute to those recommendations and conclusions.

In conclusion, we are very mindful of the importance of coordination and complementarity

among the various organs of the United Nations when required, such as coordination between the Presidents of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Under no circumstances, however, should we undermine the exclusive mandate and prerogatives of those organs with respect to the objective consideration of agenda items and the measures taken in that regard.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate and for your concept note (S/2011/726, annex), both of which are valuable in their own right and demonstrate Portugal's continued commitment to greater openness and transparency in the work of the Security Council under your presidency. My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of the Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Malaysia firmly believes that the reform of the Security Council is important to ensuring that the Council reflects today's global realities and becomes a more effective and competent body in addressing various challenges and threats to international peace and security. In that regard, we are of the view that the principles of transparency, more frequent interaction with non-members, consistency and efficiency should be applied to the entire spectrum of the Security Council's work, including in the implementation of its resolutions.

My delegation notes with much appreciation the ongoing implementation of several measures contained in document S/2010/507 to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work. We hope to participate in more interactions like today's meeting, which we believe will provide the necessary impetus for their implementation.

Allow me to first share my delegation's views on transparency of the work of the Security Council, in particular on sanctions. Malaysia welcomes the further improvement of the procedures and working methods of the Security Council with regard to the sanctions framework. However, while we maintain the highest respect for the primacy of Council resolutions, the rules of natural justice dictate that resolutions issued under Chapter VII powers should be mindful of the inherent right of individuals and entities to notice, to be heard and to be represented. As such, while assistance should always be rendered to third-party States that have been inadvertently affected by the imposition of sanctions, the rights of individuals affected thereby should also be safeguarded, in accordance with principles of international law.

In that regard, Malaysia wishes to express its deep concern about the process of listing entities and individuals pursuant to various Security Council resolutions. Our deep concern stems from the refusal thus far on the part of certain sanctions committees, and by extension the Security Council, to share pertinent information on sanctions actions affecting Malaysia.

My delegation also notes that some progress has been made in the transparency of some of the procedures of certain sanctions regimes with the incorporation of mechanisms that automatically de list petitioners unless an express decision to retain them is taken by the respective sanctions committee. Nevertheless, we advocate that more should be done to inject more transparency and fairness into the listing and de-listing processes in order to ensure that both processes are in compliance with the basic tenets of natural justice and the rule of law.

In the rejection of requests for de-listing of individuals, it is incumbent upon the respective committees to inform the Member States or individuals concerned of the reason why a de-listing request has been rejected. It is not enough for the committee to merely "make every effort" to provide reasons for objecting to a de-listing request, especially in view of the fact that significantly greater effort has been exerted to establish the sanctions regimes and, further, to place individuals and entities under them.

It would be detrimental to the Security Council's interests if requests for de-listing were rejected under the guise of security, when the true motives for rejection are political. The sanctions committees are, after all, political bodies, as opposed to independent and impartial judicial bodies. If, however, the sanctions committees decide that transparency in decision-making is not possible for security reasons, then I fear that the process will very much be subject to abuse by members of the Security Council.

I would also like to briefly touch upon the issue of encouraging greater interaction between the Security Council and non-members and other United Nations bodies. My delegation believes that the briefings given

to the Council by the Special Representatives, heads of United Nations missions, Chairpersons of the Peacebuilding Commission and the country-specific configurations and of the Secretariat are inherently useful, because they provide an account of what is actually happening on the ground. As such, we would encourage greater transparency in briefings made to the Council and for non-members of the Council to be allowed to attend briefings without the right to speak or interact. That would not only generate greater interest in many issues among the entire membership, but would also afford non-members of the Council the chance to understand subjects and the viewpoints of the Council and minimize the political speculation that can lead to misunderstanding on the part of non-members of the Council.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to commend you for an exemplary stewardship of the Council for the month of November, which in itself demonstrates reform of the Council's working methods. We have observed, Sir, your briefings to members of the press, your constant communications on the work of the Council with non-members, and your deference to the work of the General Assembly.

My delegation also appreciates the opportunity to participate in two open debates this month. This month, we have seen an increase in the transparency and interaction of the Council, and we hope that this trend will continue in the months and years to come.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore.

Mr. Chua (Singapore): I thank Portugal for convening this important debate, and I thank you personally, Sir, for your leadership. Singapore fully subscribes to the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Switzerland, who spoke on behalf of the group of five small nations (S-5).

The call for improved working methods of the Security Council and the reasons for that call have worn a deep groove in the Council and the General Assembly. Unless improvements are made, there is a real risk that the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole will end up sounding like a broken record to the rest of the world. To remain relevant, the Council needs to ensure, through reform of its working methods, that it is accountable, transparent, inclusive and effective.

However, this refrain has fallen on deaf ears. Progress in working methods reform remains uneven and slow. Some may argue that the Council should not be marching to the tune of the General Assembly, as the Council is master of its own procedures. However, the effective functioning of the Council directly impacts not just relations between the General Assembly and the Council, but also each and every Member State with a stake in international peace and security. If the Council is to act for the benefit of the wider membership, it should be willing to engage members in open and honest dialogue and create a virtuous cycle of feedback and effective decision-making.

In that spirit, we in the S-5 have set out in our draft resolution specific suggestions on how the authority and effectiveness of the Council could be improved. I will mention one proposal that is closely tied to inclusiveness.

The growing complexity of today's global challenges means that the Council must consider many factors and actors, if it were to address any problem comprehensively. When considering peacekeeping mandates, for instance, there is a need to systematically factor in peacebuilding considerations. The Council could regularly invite Chairs of the country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission to participate in relevant discussions. It would also be good if the Council sought out Member States' views on their ability to implement Council decisions.

Some will point to the increasing number of open debates in the Council as evidence of the Council's reformed working methods. But open debates in themselves do not necessarily enhance the Council's accountability, transparency, inclusiveness or effectiveness. Given that outcomes are often predetermined, it is difficult to see how open debates can give Member States insight into the Council's deliberations or enable the Council to benefit from Member States' views on its work.

To be honest, the so-called open debates seem to substitute for genuine dialogue between the Council and the wider membership. Such suboptimal communication between the Council and the General Assembly cannot continue. If we are unintelligible even to ourselves, we will not be able to send the strong and coherent messages that the world is in dire need of today.

It is clear that there are still many working methods issues to be addressed. We need a sustained and genuine dialogue between the Council and the wider membership on working methods that can help us reflect on where we are, review what has yet to be done, and figure out what more we should do. The S-5 stands ready to engage constructively with the Council on that important endeavour.

The world is undergoing a profound transition and transformation. We are at an inflection point. The Security Council needs to adapt to changing geostrategic circumstances. The ultimate solution that we all look towards is, of course, broad-based Council reform, but working methods need to be improved now. Otherwise, the Council and the United Nations both risk becoming a broken record. In this wired and networked age, the Council and the United Nations should be working on a digital platform, not an analog turntable.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I wish to express to you my gratitude for convening this important meeting and for the concept paper distributed earlier to facilitate the implementation of the note contained in document S/2010/507 on the working methods of the Security Council. While associating my delegation with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, let me share and emphasize the following points as well.

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to reforming the working methods of the Security Council with a view to strengthening the Council's role in promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations, particularly the maintenance of international peace and security and the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as developing friendly relations among nations and upholding the rule of law in the international relations among States by taking into account the interests of the general membership of the United Nations.

One of the major concerns we have is the excessive reliance on the unlawful use of force or the threat of such use by powerful members of the Security Council in order to advance their interests through outdated practices, thereby continuing to endanger international peace and security and undermine the fundamental principles of the United Nations and international law. The discussion of the reform of the Security Council and its working methods would well provide a platform for Member States to review and to renew their commitments to the lofty principles of the Charter and the main organs of the United Nations that are supposed to promote peaceful international relations among States.

As is correctly noted in the concept paper, contained in the annex to document S/2011/726, the lack of improvement in the three interlinked and key areas of transparency, interaction with non-members and efficiency in the working methods of the Security Council continues to be the principle theme suggested for discussion with the aim of identifying ways of improving all those aspects. I wish to build on those shortcomings through further elaboration and a few practical suggestions, as follows.

First, according to Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council should act on behalf of all Member States, but, in reality, Council decisions not only reflect the wishes and the views of the general membership less and less, but, in many cases, do not even represent the genuine opinion of its own membership.

Secondly, despite the requirements set forth in the Council's own decisions on its working methods, including those contained in document S/2010/507, which, for instance, call for consultation by the Council with the broader United Nations membership, in particular interested Member States, including countries directly involved or specifically affected, when drafting, inter alia, resolutions, presidential statements and press statements, in many cases, however, the general membership, even the countries concerned, are kept totally uninformed of the negotiations on resolutions or statements directly affecting them, nor are their views even sought on the Council's outcome documents. That is also the case for non-permanent members, which are frequently faced with secretive negotiations among a few permanent members on important issues.

Thirdly, the quick and unnecessary resort to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and the threat or use of sanctions in cases where no action is even necessary are other disturbing facts that have

undermined the credibility and legitimacy of the Council's decisions.

Fourthly, the Security Council sanctions regime needs to be reviewed. Sanctions should be imposed only in strict conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter and should avoid exceeding the Council's authority or acting in breach of the principles of international law.

In order to increase the transparency of its work, achieve a balanced approach in its interaction with non-members and improve the efficiency of its working methods, the Council should seriously address those shortcomings and take into consideration the relevant provisions of the Charter, as well as the resolutions that clarify its relationship with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations. In fact, the Security Council's increasing encroachment on the prerogatives of other main organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies, as well as such technical bodies as the International Atomic Energy Agency, is also of particular concern to Member States.

The Security Council's failure to adequately improve its working methods and decision-making processes has brought about a situation in which we witness a decline in international public opinion's trust in that important organ. Undoubtedly, impartiality, transparency and fairness are the key premises on which the Security Council should base its approach in discharging its Charter-mandated responsibilities. Every effort should be made to render the Council more democratic, representative and accountable. My delegation stands ready to contribute to the achievement of those goals.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium): I have the honour to address the Council on behalf of the Netherlands and Belgium. First of all, I would like to thank Portugal, as President of the Security Council, for having convened this debate. It reminds me of a debate that I had the honour to preside over in August 2008, which was dedicated to the same theme (see S/PV.5968). We would also like to express our gratitude to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to Japan for steering this agenda in 2011 and before.

In recent years, real and encouraging improvements have been made in the working methods of the Security Council. Your concept note (S/2011/726, annex), Mr. President, makes that very clear, and rightly so. The debates on working methods have already produced results. It is good to remind ourselves that the Council today operates under new, better and more transparent working methods than before. So there has been movement, there is movement and, hopefully, there will continue to be movement, be it incremental and sometimes discreet, but definitely movement. The Netherlands and Belgium would like to commend both the permanent members and the successive elected members of the Council on their efforts in that regard.

The Netherlands and Belgium want to stress that fact, because we do not want the further development of better working methods to become hostage to a lack of progress in the wider debate on Security Council reform. In other words, we do not want the working methods debate to come to a halt because there is no movement or progress on the other chapters of the Security Council reform agenda currently being debated in the General Assembly.

In your concept note, Sir, you invite the wider membership to come up with practical suggestions aimed at enhancing transparency, efficiency and Council interaction with United Nations members at large that could make a difference in the day-to-day Security Council business. The Netherlands and Belgium would like to submit some very concrete ideas, it being understood that none of those ideas, if implemented, would encroach on the decision-making power of the Security Council. The Netherlands and Belgium wish to fully respect the powers of the Security Council and its members, permanent and elected, as set out in the Charter.

First, let us encourage the monthly presidencies of the Council to take whatever action needed, within their powers, in order to enhance the transparency, the outreach towards the wider United Nations membership and the efficiency of the Council. In recent times, inventive and creative presidencies have taken welcome steps in that direction, which deserve to become more common practice. There are now more, public briefings, more public debates, more Arria Formula meetings and more informal interactive dialogues. That is much appreciated by the wider membership. That modern approach to working

methods enhances not only interaction with Member States, but also the potential to increase the Council's outreach towards regional organizations, civil society and interested individuals.

Secondly, the Netherlands and Belgium see room for further improvements when it comes to country-specific debates. It is the task of the Security Council to discuss challenges in specific countries. However, sometimes, the country concerned is not included in those discussions, when their [presence really matters.

A way to enhance the transparency and the inclusiveness of the Security Council's work would be to invite countries regarding which issues are being debated but that are not members of the Security Council to contribute to Council debates of particular importance and under a formula to be decided on an ad hoc basis. By doing so, the Security Council would give a fair and decent chance to countries to put their point of view forward. After hearing such a country, the Security Council can still discuss the issues at stake in a restricted debate among its own members without the country concerned having to be present. The same goes for the Chairs of Peacebuilding configurations, who could similarly contribute in an even more effective way to the deliberations of the Council with regard to the country on the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) agenda.

A similar reflection can be made with regard to the need for increased interaction between the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat. That type of interaction would be particularly welcome prior to the deployment and after the return of technical assessment missions.

Thirdly, the notion of peace and security today encompasses a far broader scope than it did 65 years ago. In recent years, Security Council debates have focused on climate change, international crime, terrorism, piracy, diseases, natural resources and other so-called "new" issues that affect international peace and security. We would like to encourage the Council to consult even more broadly than it has done so far.

Fourthly, the Netherlands and Belgium strongly believe that there is potential for more inclusive and more transparent working methods in the subsidiary organs. Those organs prepare Council decisions and can thus only benefit from external advice at their level.

Let me give one example. The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, currently under German chairmanship, has granted access to the Chairs of PBC configurations, because issues such as child soldiers and gender-based violence against children are, all too often, common practice in countries on the agenda of the PBC. That practice of granting access to a subsidiary organ should be generalized and should be adopted as a general rule by all subsidiary organs, as appropriate.

The Netherlands and Belgium have taken on an active role in the debate on wider Security Council reform. I believe that our statement of last Monday during the first exchange of views during the eighth round of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform clearly underlined our common strong commitment to Security Council reform in all its aspects.

Improving the Security Council's working methods is clearly one aspect of the ongoing negotiations in the intergovernmental negotiations in the General Assembly, just as it is an issue under consideration by this Council.

(*spoke in French*)

Finally, as others have done before me, I would like to congratulate the President on the way he has chaired this Council throughout November. He has handled this very heavy task with a great deal of authority and elegance.

The President: I thank the Ambassador for his kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): I join the Belgian Ambassador in paying compliments to the President of the Council for the past month and particularly for promoting this open debate today.

New Zealand has long maintained that, in addition to changes to the composition of the Security Council, there is an equally pressing need for wide-ranging reform of its working methods. As the Belgian Ambassador emphasized, one reform should not be hostage to the other. This stems from our belief that, just as the Council derives its authority from the Charter, it must be accountable to all the 193 Member States that adhere to that Charter. The values and principles it must uphold are our values and our principles; the global peace and security it upholds is

our peace and security; and its successes and indeed its failures in fulfilling its mandate profoundly affect us all.

For the overwhelming majority of Member States that are not members of this Council — the faces pressed against the window — its working methods affect our ability to understand and contribute to its work. In turn, they directly affect the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council itself. All States have a stake in ensuring that those working methods are transparent, inclusive and effective, and when they are discussed, we all have a right to have our voices heard and listened to.

New Zealand therefore welcomes today's debate, the fourth on this topic since 1994. Since then, significant improvements have been made to Council working methods, most notably through presidential notes S/2006/507 and S/2010/507. We commend those welcome changes. Today's discussions provide an opportunity to review progress and to highlight areas where further improvements can be made. In the interests of time, I will focus on just four.

First, we acknowledge the significance of the measures in note S/2010/507, but we still need more consistent and meaningful implementation of those measures. Such implementation would go a long way towards enhancing the transparency, inclusiveness and quality of Council deliberations. Achieving that, however, requires that we challenge the Council's traditional culture and achieve a major shift in longstanding mindsets.

Achieving that means that, whenever possible, Council meetings, regardless of format, must be open, and that there must be a clear and compelling reason — preferably one that is publicly stated — when that is not the case. It means making participation in such meetings more meaningful and providing genuine scope for non-members to contribute to Council deliberations throughout the decision-making process. It also means achieving more timely, consistent and meaningful interaction with those non-members that have a legitimate stake in its deliberations, particularly troop- and police-contributing countries and countries that are actually on the Council agenda. One way of achieving that would be to make greater use of innovative Council meeting formats, such as informal interactive dialogues.

It also means sharing draft documents with non-Council members sooner and more frequently and giving affected parties greater opportunities for input in the preparation of those documents. It means stimulating more substantive and interactive discussions between Council members themselves. And above all, it means making transparency and inclusiveness a reflex action. Transparency and inclusiveness should be the norm for the Council's work, not the exception.

The cultural shift required for the more consistent and meaningful implementation of the recommendations in note S/2010/507 will take time, but it would help significantly if there were a more systematic process for monitoring progress in that implementation. As a first step, the Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters should consider developing a concrete action plan that establishes clear goals and benchmarks for implementation. Such a plan could form the basis of regular progress reports, perhaps as part of the Council's annual report to the General Assembly. Ideally, those reports would be informed by, and would in turn feed into, future open debates in the Council itself.

Secondly, we need to review current Council conventions that inhibit the optimal and equitable distribution of tasks and responsibilities. For example, the conventions under which the permanent five (P5) alone determine the Chairs of subsidiary bodies, under which chairing roles are allocated to elected members only, and under which the P5 always lead on country-specific resolutions all lack any obvious justification and should be discontinued.

Thirdly, we must ensure that the Council more effectively draws on the expertise of, and coordinates its activities with, relevant external actors. We urge the Council to build on recent positive steps to increase meaningful interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission, particularly with the Chairs of country-specific configurations and with regional and subregional organizations. Consideration should also be given to expanding that interaction to other relevant actors. Such interactions need not impinge on the Council's powers and prerogatives. Indeed, properly handled, they have the potential to augment the quality and legitimacy of its deliberations.

Fourthly, we need to reconsider the existing practice regarding use of the veto. New Zealand's views on the veto are well known, and they have been consistent since we and others forced a vote on its inclusion in the Charter in 1945. The veto is a truly awesome power. Greater transparency regarding the circumstances in which its holders would contemplate its use and in explaining its actual use would help reassure other States that its holders are wielding that power responsibly.

Agreement on an informal code guiding the use of the veto would be a welcome initiative. It was described by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Spain as obligations of conduct, and we agree.

Those entrusted with the privilege and responsibility of serving on the Security Council, whether as permanent or non-permanent members, can effectively discharge their duties only with the support and cooperation of all other Member States — those same States that elect non-permanent members and whose adherence to the Charter underpins the Council's authority and its legitimacy. We non-members — the "P-178" — have much to contribute to the Council's work, and we have every right to expect transparency, meaningful opportunities for participation and, above all, effective decision-making from the Council.

New Zealand acknowledges the genuine improvements made in the Council's working methods since the first open debate, in 1994, and, again, we compliment those responsible. It is in all of our interests that we now move to complete that work by seeing today's discussions translated into more meaningful action and into more consistent practice.

After all, this is not just a Council for its five permanent members. It is not just a Council, pro tem, for its non-permanent members. It is our Council, too.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

As I believe members know, I decided to speak last in this open debate in order to be able to bring into my statement suggestions and comments that were made here today.

I think that the wide participation in this debate is evidence that the issue of the Security Council's working methods is indeed a matter of interest for us all. While it is up to the Council to adopt its own rules of procedure, questions regarding its efficiency, transparency and interaction with the general membership concern all Member States.

That is why debates such as this one, open to the wider membership, are of crucial importance. They help the Council to assess regularly how its practices match those aims, while presenting us with an excellent opportunity to collect invaluable inputs from the wider membership on ways to improve it further.

Enhancing transparency, efficiency and interaction with non-members of the Council is our collective goal. This is a substantive concern, not a formal one. The question is how to make the Council more operational and effective, with a better use of its time and resources and with the full engagement and participation of all its members, and how to strengthen its global influence as a principal body which acts on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations by bringing it closer to them. The question is, ultimately, how to underline the Council's authority through enhanced accountability, through a better understanding of its decisions, and through a more open, participatory and efficient decision-making process.

In recent years, much has been done by the Council on the issue of working methods, as has been repeatedly stated today, including through its Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Note 507 (S/2010/507) reflects an important set of substantive improvements in Security Council practice. Portugal commends the efforts of Council delegations leading to the adoption of that important document last year. In particular, we would like to underline the leadership of Japan in this meticulous enterprise.

Now it is important to ensure that those collective efforts were not made in vain. We must intensify our commitment to monitoring the implementation of the new agreed practices on methods of work and assess their impact on the intended goals of enhanced transparency, efficiency and interaction with the United Nations membership.

There is always room for improvement, and we welcome in this regard the input of all Member States. Allow me also to recognize the leading role of the group of five small nations in their tireless efforts to present us, in recent years, with useful thoughts and

proposals aimed at improving the Security Council's working methods.

On the issue of transparency, the Council, in our assessment, during the past year continued the trend of holding more public meetings. Briefings were regularly made in public, giving the opportunity also to non-members of the Council to benefit from useful information on various situations on the Council's agenda. While consultations are useful in order to better prepare Council decisions, some effort still has to be made, in our view, not to resort so often to consultations, instead leaving consultations for when they are really needed, as informal and reserved closed settings — which they are indeed — to help build consensus and speed up decision-making.

Monthly briefings by the Presidents, including wrap-up meetings, should be encouraged. This point was also made by the representatives of Guatemala, Egypt, Costa Rica and Spain, referring to the recent example set by Brazil. We intend to follow this practice and hold, as announced in the Journal, an informal meeting tomorrow at 4.30 p.m. with the wider membership, as a wrap-up of the Portuguese presidency. These are useful practices to enhance both transparency and interaction with the wider membership, and it is a positive development that these are becoming regular practices.

A more active role on the part of Council Presidents should, however, be encouraged, so as to enhance the visibility of the Council, including in their regular contacts with the press. The contribution of the presidencies in preparing more informative monthly assessments should also be nurtured. Assessments are useful instruments that will increase awareness of the work of the Council once they are circulated among the wider membership. They should provide useful insights from the perspective of the presidencies, not mere factual descriptions. More thought should be put into improving the analytical aspect of the assessments, as they are the source of the introduction to the Security Council's annual report. This point was also made by many delegations here today, including Switzerland, Egypt, Japan and Morocco.

On the issue of efficiency, some improvements were made in consultations, where a considerable part of the Council's work takes place, as reflected in the Council's annual report: shortening the scripts and the use of videoconferences are some of the positive measures taken in this regard. Greater conviviality, interaction and informality in such an informal setting only add to efficiency, and some efforts has been made this year by Council members in that regard.

Nevertheless, some work also has to be done as regards the unbalanced workload in the monthly agenda. Many months are overloaded, with several overlapping reporting deadlines and mandates requiring extension at the same time — a situation that requires some rethinking of how the Council can better deal with recurrent matters without that exercise absorbing most of its time, leaving little space on its agenda for it to react to emerging crises and, most of all, to exercise its role in the area of conflict prevention.

Some thought is being devoted to this issue in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, as was noted by the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the start of this debate. I take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Ivan Barbalić for his leading role as Chair of the Informal Working Group.

Overall, with respect to the day-to-day internal work of the Council, more effort should be put into improving the exchange of information among all members, promoting wider participation and initiative in its internal decision-making process. In our view, this would enhance not only the Council's efficiency but also its legitimacy as a principal organ of the United Nations; this matter was raised by a number of delegations here, including that of India.

Further efforts also have to be made as concerns public meetings from the perspective of their efficiency. Statements by delegations are usually too long. Open debates in particular take too much time. Further efforts must be made to focus our interventions, both Council and non- Council, and abide by the time suggested. Concept papers on questions to be addressed are useful tools in this regard.

Turning to interaction with non-members of the Council, in informal consultations the Council continued to avail itself of the possibility of holding interactive dialogues, which continued to prove very useful in that different actors were heard in an informal setting, with the aim of helping the Council in its decision-making process. This trend should be encouraged. Arria-formula meetings also continued to

be organized. These new formats may be very beneficial to the Council's work, promoting interaction at an informal level, enhancing dialogue and improving information exchange. In our view, they could be used more frequently. Tour d'horizon meetings with the Department of Political Affairs are now being held regularly and have proved to be useful instruments from the perspective of conflict prevention, and I must thank the British presidency for having introduced them. Meetings with Special Representatives of the Secretary General have also proved beneficial to the Council's work, as highlighted by some delegations here today.

Debates, in particular open debates, could facilitate greater interactivity. When the Council decides to hold an open debate, the goal is to listen to the wider membership and, if appropriate, reflect the relevant inputs in the ensuing outcomes, when there are any — not speaking first, deciding on the outcome and then listening to the wider membership. I think that there is undoubtedly room for improvement here, as well as in terms of increased interactivity, greater focus and shorter statements — giving real meaning to the very concept of Council open debates. This point was, as will be recalled, underlined here by some delegations, including those of Mexico, Slovenia and Morocco.

What more can we do? Surely, we can continue to intensify the implementation of note 507 in all its aspects. The Secretariat has a central role to play in supporting presidencies and in reminding delegations to use different tools agreed in that note.

I also would like to highlight some useful suggestions put forward here today. On the annual report, more analytical information, as well as information on Council working methods, could be requested. In our view, we could take more benefit from the presentation of the annual report to the General Assembly, and in this sense we welcome the decision of the President of the Assembly to devote the debate at this session entirely to the Council's annual report. But we think that these presentations could improve as well, by focusing on specific aspects of the Council work that were more salient during the precedent year. Once again, more leeway could be granted to the presidencies in drafting their introduction to the report.

More work has to be done to establish a closer Council relation with other bodies, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, especially in the informal work with the chairs of the country-specific configurations and the President of the Economic and Social Council. We agree with those delegations — Brazil, Luxembourg and Switzerland — that referred to the usefulness of such interaction. The need for further reflection on the role of the Military Staff Committee was also encouraged.

Some important suggestions were also made as to the need for more transparency in the work of the subsidiary bodies, the selection and independence of the panels of experts, and the need for more inclusiveness in the process leading to the election of the chairs of the subsidiary bodies. We need also to give further reflection to the implementation of presidential note S/2006/507 concerning the work of subsidiary bodies, which was the outcome of several years of work in the former Working Group on Sanctions. Relevant statements, including those of Jordan, Liechtenstein, New Zealand and Spain, touched upon the use of the veto, making substantive contributions to this debate.

I wish to make one final remark to highlight the importance of this debate. The number and complexity of situations that the Council has to follow require an increasingly demanding managing capacity of its programme of work. However, in today's world, with new threats and challenges to peace and security emerging, the Council has to look ahead be able to anticipate crisis and devote enough time to conflict prevention. And, to that end, it needs to work continuously on its working methods to increase its efficiency and to be able to fully exercise its responsibilities.

I personally found this debate extremely useful, and I thank all delegations for their interest in this matter and their relevant contributions, which encourage us to pursue our efforts to always improve the working methods of the Security Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. Before adjourning the meeting, however, and as this is, I hope, my last meeting as President of the Council, I wish to make two very brief but heartfelt remarks.

The first is to Movses Abelian and the Security Council secretariat for the extremely professional, knowledgeable, kind and even affectionate way in which they supported us this month. They are indeed not only the sixth permanent member of the Security Council, but truly indispensable. We are very grateful for all the support Mr. Abelian and his team have given us.

My second remark is one of deep appreciation for our interpreters. They are extremely professional people who permanently show enormous dedication and great patience in dealing with our idiosyncrasies. I thank them all very much indeed.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.